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SCENIC HIGHWAY

beverly hills
general plan

11-75

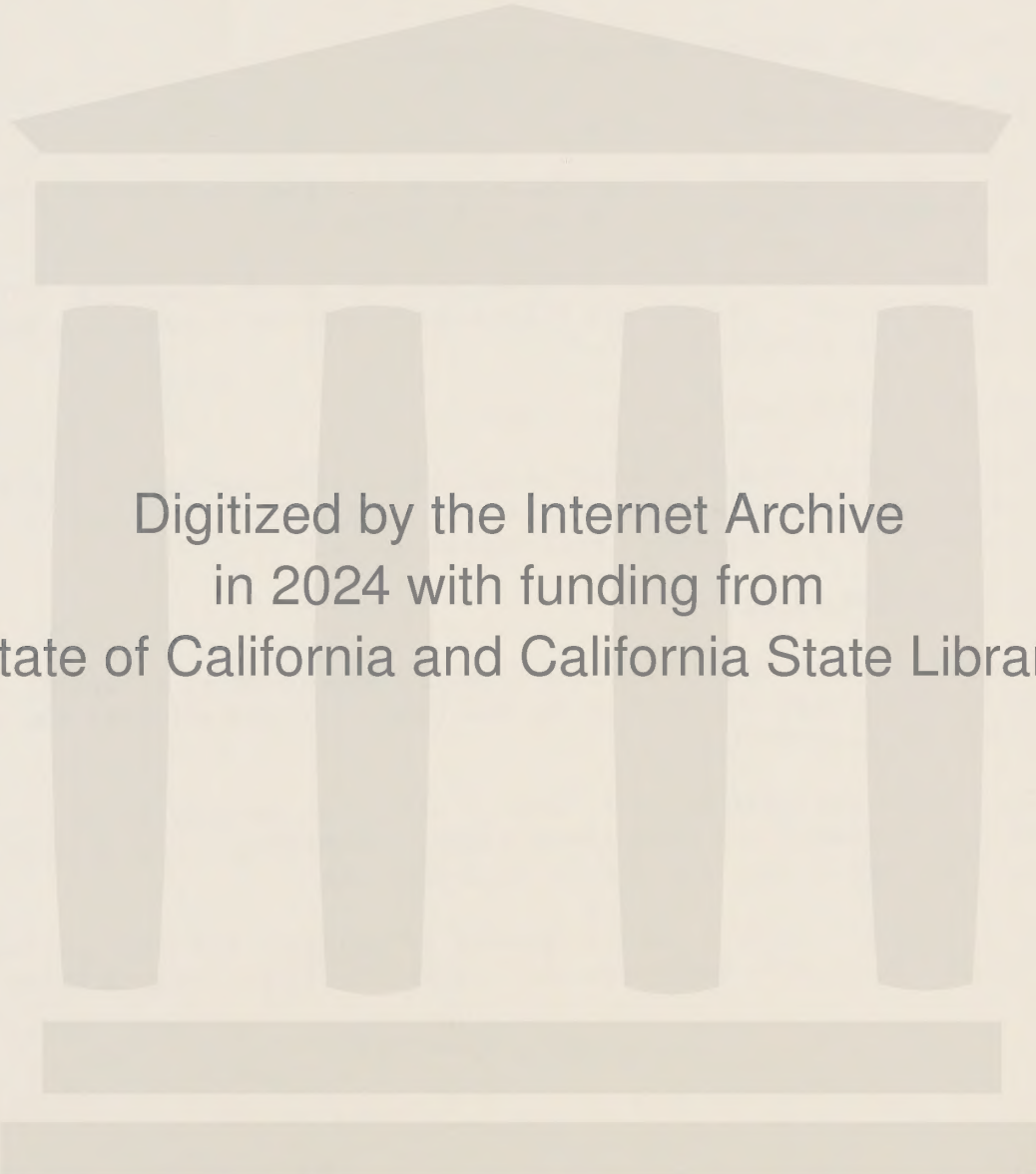
Note: On March 6, 1976, by Resolution No. 76-R-5426, the Beverly Hills City Council adopted pages 1 through 7 of this document.

SCENIC HIGHWAY ELEMENT ABSTRACT

1. Impetus for program: State requirement.
2. Existing Situation.
 - 2.1. No "scenic highways" are designated or proposed to date by Beverly Hills, the State of California, or the U.S. Government.
 - 2.2. Two Beverly Hills streets were adopted as "scenic highways" by the Los Angeles County: Sunset and Wilshire Boulevards (report not recommended for adoption by Beverly Hills).^{1/}
3. Existing Municipal Policies: None.
4. Issues: None with the possible exception of Santa Monica Boulevard. No scenic corridor exists which could be said to be threatened by urban development or by projected road improvements.
5. Proposed Solutions.^{2/}
 - 5.1. Designate Santa Monica east of Wilshire Boulevard as a "scenic highway" as an additional opportunity to maintain City control over the street's width and alignment.
 - 5.2. The County designation will have no effect on Beverly Hills since they have no jurisdiction over these roads. Accordingly, the County designation need not enter into the City's deliberations.
6. Environmental Impacts (i.e., impacts if Element were implemented.) An EIR was developed that concluded that there would be no significant impact.

L Beverly Hills. Dept. of pl.
City pl. Bev. Hills
Highways " "

- 1/ Los Angeles County Preliminary Scenic Highway Element. As a result of the recent court action (The Coalition for Los Angeles County Planning in the Public Interest vs. The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles), this adopted Scenic Highway Element has been at least temporarily voided.
- 2/ As with any specialized study, the recommendations must be considered in terms of their priorities relative to other municipal projects competing for the City's attention and financial resources.



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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Purposes of Element.

The purpose of this State-required Element is to propose the development of scenic highways and to protect the scenic corridors through which they are located pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.5 of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code of the State of California. The Beverly Hills Scenic Highway Element follows the suggested format and is intended to fulfill the requirements of the State law. The applicability of this Element to built-up urban areas is limited and with few exceptions, the unique scenic qualities of Beverly Hills are better protected through other means.

1.2. Objectives of Element.

According to the State enabling legislation, the objective of the Element is to preserve and enhance aesthetic resources within scenic corridors so that travelers, both on foot or in vehicles, passing through these areas are afforded a pleasurable experience and are assured that the resource is protected for the future.

It is not the purpose of the scenic highway element in an urban setting to draw traffic to it, as this would be counterproductive. Further, although there is a unique character and quality to the residential and commercial streets of the City, it is believed that they should be protected through more appropriate and suitable regulatory devices.

2. PLAN.

There is no "problem" in Beverly Hills which requires a program of scenic highways as a solution. That is, there are no areas "threatened" by development of a highway, or by urban development, the impact of which could be minimized by the development of a scenic corridor study.

The County of Los Angeles has designated City streets as "scenic highways" in their Scenic Highway Element. Portions of two of them traverse Beverly Hills: Wilshire and Sunset Boulevards. The City will probably neither gain nor lose by proposed designations, and, therefore, no action in support or in opposition is suggested. (The Element does not propose that Beverly Hills designate these as scenic highways.)

The Scenic Highway Element requirement, however, can be useful to Beverly Hills. It may provide an additional opportunity to retain a voice in determining the future of Santa Monica Boulevard, and, therefore, it is recommended that the City designate Santa Monica Boulevard east of Wilshire Boulevard as a "scenic highway." The freeway proposed for this route is apparently dead, and there have been discussions by the State altering the roadway to allow better traffic flow. Therefore, designation of the route as a scenic highway, preparation of a corridor study (required next step), and development of standards for the roadway are timely. (See Map.)

Although there is no requirement that the State incorporate the City's objectives and plans into the State plan, it would be our intent to provide the State with input from the City to be considered in the development of the State plans. If the State were to adopt the City's designation and standards, then Santa Monica Boulevard would receive the protection of a scenic highway.

- 1/ The County cannot designate nonCounty roads as scenic highways.
- 2/ As a result of the recent court action (The Coalition for Los Angeles County Planning in the Public Interest vs. the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles), this adopted Scenic Highway Element has been at least temporarily voided.

MAP

SCENIC HIGHWAYS

DATE: April, 1975

Beverly Hills, Department of City Planning

Benedict
Cañon

Coldwater
Cañon

Sunset

Wilshire

Santa Monica

Olympic

Burton Way

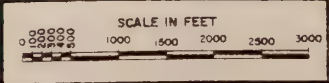
La Cienega

San Vicente

Beverly

Doheny

Robertson



3. BACKGROUND DATA.

3.1. Existing Situation.

Two Beverly Hills streets have been designated as scenic highways by Los Angeles County in their Scenic Highway Element, adopted in November, 1974.* The County has no legal power to designate roads within incorporated cities. Thus, the action is only advisory. Local cities are not required to implement the policies and the Beverly Hills Element does not propose inclusion of the routes. These routes are:

- a. County scenic highway number 61: Sunset Boulevard (entire length, between El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historical Park and Pacific Coast Highway) and
- b. County scenic highway number 62: Wilshire-San Vicente Boulevards (between El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historical Park and Ocean Avenue via Flower, Temple, and Main Streets).

Both of these designations are in the "second priority" listings of the County, that is, they are in areas that require one or more of the following types of actions. Presumably, the following actions would be contemplated within the unincorporated areas.

- a. restoration of impaired aesthetic resources in designated scenic corridors,
- b. improved governmental commitment to State and local scenic highway programs,
- c. strengthening of the State Scenic Highway Program, and
- d. Developing of a program for selected corridor studies included in the medium- and long-range action areas.

"Second priority" activities were originally anticipated to begin in about five years from program inception.*

According to a spokesperson, Los Angeles County designated Wilshire and Sunset Boulevards as scenic highways because they were "unique" and because the City of Los Angeles planned to propose similar designations in its Scenic Highway Element.

Coldwater Canon and Benedict Canon Drives are not now being considered for proposal as scenic highways in the City of Los Angeles Scenic Highway Element. No reason was given for this although it was noted that the Laurel Canyon and Sepulveda Pass would probably be proposed for designation by the City.

* Los Angeles County Preliminary Scenic Highway Element, October, 1974, page 31 ff. As a result of the recent court action (The Coalition for Los Angeles County Planning in the Public Interest vs. the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles), this adopted Scenic Highway Element has been at least temporarily voided.

3.2. Existing Policies.

At this time, there are no policies on scenic highways in Beverly Hills.

3.3. Standards.

No State standards have been developed to evaluate whether or not certain streets or corridors should be considered scenic; existing standards tend to be subjective and general. Most standards stress the preservation of rural or agrarian areas; however, some deal with urban development. The following section has been extracted from the Standards Section of the Los Angeles County Proposed Scenic Highway Element* and reflects criteria which may be useful to Beverly Hills in developing standards and criteria for the designation of scenic highways.

3.3.1. General.

Scenic highway criteria and standards are the means by which potential routes are evaluated and the suitability of specific implementation programs determined.

Criteria are generally non-quantitative rules, while standards are usually quantitative, or measurable.

The responsibility for establishing criteria and standards rests primarily with the local jurisdictions. The State has established general guidelines, but has left local government the task of developing and enforcing specific criteria and standards. Most of those relate to new freeways or major highways, and thus are not suitable to Beverly Hills:

- Identification and selection of candidate routes and establishment of study priorities,
- Guiding the delineation and evaluation of corridors,
- Judging the effectiveness of corridor protection programs and the design of roadways.

In Beverly Hills, Sunset Boulevard and Wilshire Boulevard represent corridors which have been defined by the County.

3.3.2. General Criteria for Route Selection.

Within the Scenic Highway Element three sets of criteria will be discussed. Criteria for the Selection of a System of Candidate Routes: The criteria used for determining routes to be shown on the Map are:

- Routes which traverse urban areas of scenic quality and interest and which may provide access to major recreation areas such as the Pacific Ocean; and
- Urban routes providing access to interesting and aesthetic man-made features, such as the Wilshire Corridor;
- Logical connectors or links between routes meeting the selection criteria ci-

* Los Angeles County Preliminary Scenic Highway Element, October, 1974, page 17 ff.

ted above are also considered eligible provided the particular connector contributes to the completion of a closed loop or system of routes. The inclusion of these connections is important to provide the viewer with a continuous network of interesting visual experiences.

4. GLOSSARY OF TERMS.*

Scenic corridor - the visible land area outside of the highway right-of-way which can be realistically subjected to protective land use controls.

Scenic highway - a road, in addition to its transportation function, that provides opportunities for enjoyment of natural and man-made scenic resources where aesthetic values are protected and enhanced.

Officially designated scenic highway - a State or County route whose scenic corridor protection program has been approved by the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS); shown on official publications and posted with official "poppy signs."

* Source: County of Los Angeles Preliminary Scenic Highway Element, October, 1974, page 3.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT.

5.1. Introduction.

As of December 17, 1973, all general plan elements that are to be individually adopted must have an environmental impact report as a part of the adoption process. This action was taken pursuant to Division 13, Chapter 2.6., Section 21083 of the Public Resource Code of the State of California. This portion of the document, therefore, analyzes the environmental impacts likely to occur if the Beverly Hills Scenic Highway Element were implemented.

5.2. Project Description.

5.2.1. General.

The Scenic Highway Element identifies the two scenic highways that the County plans to develop in Beverly Hills: Wilshire and Sunset Boulevards; and it cites the reasons given by the County for taking this position. Furthermore, it describes routes that the City of Los Angeles is likely to propose in its Scenic Highway Element that would abut and, therefore, possibly affect Beverly Hills. (The City of Los Angeles Scenic Highway Element is still in preparation.)

In addition, the Element analyzes in general terms the aesthetic qualities of the City; and it proposes another route as a scenic highway: Santa Monica Boulevard, east of Wilshire Boulevard.

5.2.2. Present Program.

At this time, the City has no program pursuant to scenic highways.

In some jurisdictions, the proposal of this Element could probably affect or be affected by other general plan elements, including Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Land Use, and Design; this is unlikely in Beverly Hills. The Element must be reviewed relative to other factors which are discussed in other elements; and a unified strategy ought to be developed with which to deal with the City's problems. This is especially significant if City monies were expended.

5.2.3. Future Programs.

The Element proposes no action be taken in Beverly Hills. There is no problem and thus no need for new programs. However, as a part of the proposed designation of Santa Monica Boulevard, a corridor study is required to be completed by staff. After City Council approval, the State would be encouraged to designate the same portion of Santa Monica Boulevard (State Route 2) as a scenic highway and adopt the preservation ordinance developed by the City.

5.2.4. Methodology.

The proposals of various agencies were reviewed; spokespeople were contacted in the City of Los Angeles because its Element had not yet been completed. A brief analysis of the design of the City was undertaken with the specific goal of determining whether any scenic highways or corridors existed; and, if so, to determine their precise location. Also, the Element was related to other portions of the General Plan Revision Studies.

5.3. Environmental Setting.

The Environmental Setting of this EIR was discussed in the Environmental Setting Report, published in April, 1975, by the City of Beverly Hills. This report is concerned with a variety of physical and social factors that influence the environment.

5.4. Environmental Impacts.^{1/}

5.4.1. Introduction.

This section analyzes the environmental impacts that would occur if the Beverly Hills Scenic Highway Element were adopted and if the recommendations in it were implemented.^{2/}

5.4.2. General: None.

5.4.3. Soils, Topography, and Geology: None.

5.4.4. Drainage and Groundwater: None.

5.4.5. Geologic Resources: None.

5.4.6. Vegetation and Wildlife: None.

5.4.7. Historic and Archaeologic Sites: None.

5.4.8. Climate: None.

5.4.9. Air Quality.

None. Additional vehicles would not be drawn to Santa Monica Boulevard because its scenic highway status would not be signed. Further, even if additional vehicles did

1/ The numerical format of this section and of Section 5.5. follow that of the Environmental Setting Report. The purpose of this is to facilitate joint use of the documents.

2/ The impacts of County designation of Beverly Hills roads would presumably be discussed in the County EIR.

use the street because of its designation, it is unlikely that this impact would be significant given the existing air quality levels and because no significant increase is anticipated in traffic volumes. (This is also true of the County-proposed routes.) (See Section 5.4.13.)

5.4.10. Noise.

None. Additional vehicles would not be drawn to Santa Monica Boulevard because its scenic highway status would not be signed. Further, even if additional vehicles did use the street because of the designation, it is unlikely that this impact would be significant. The existing noise levels are very high on all streets proposed for Scenic Highways. (This is also true of the County-proposed routes.) (See Section 5.4.13.)

TABLE 1

Generalized 24-Hour Noise Levels on Proposed or Adopted Scenic Highways

Street	dB(A)
Sunset Boulevard (western portion)	75
Sunset Boulevard (eastern portion, estimate)	79
Wilshire Boulevard (in Business Triangle)	75
Wilshire Boulevard (eastern portion)	75
Santa Monica Boulevard (western portion)	75
Santa Monica Boulevard (eastern portion)	73

Source: Beverly Hills Department of City Planning, January, 1975.

These noise levels are amongst the highest in the City of Beverly Hills. In fact, the Sunset Boulevard-Canon Drive intersection and Santa Monica Boulevard near the Beverly Hilton Hotel (slightly west of proposed scenic highway) are amongst the four sites with the highest readings within the City: 79 dB(A).

5.4.11. Community Services: None.

5.4.12. Utilities: None.

5.4.13. Traffic and Circulation.

None. While improbable, there may be a slight increase in traffic because of the designation of certain streets as scenic highways. However, this has not occurred in most other instances where streets have been so designated. It is probable that this effect would be minimal for two reasons. First, the streets adopted or proposed for scenic highways already carry extremely high numbers of autos. (See Table 2.)

It is possible, however, that traffic increases could occur on Sundays or holidays, at times when traffic tends to be lighter.

TABLE 2

Current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Counts at Selected Intersections

(Vehicles entering intersections, east and west traffic only)

Intersection	ADT
Sunset Boulevard at Rexford Drive	32,500
Sunset Boulevard at Hillcrest Drive	35,400
Wilshire Boulevard at Bedford Drive	33,900
Wilshire Boulevard at Rexford Drive	36,900
Santa Monica Boulevard at Roxbury Drive	40,500
Santa Monica Boulevard at Rexford Drive	37,800

Source: Beverly Hills Department of Traffic & Parking, March, 1973,
and August, 1974.

There is an additional reason for not anticipating increases in vehicular traffic because of the reclassification of local streets as scenic highways: the case of the State. The State reclassified certain highways as scenic highways, and they advertised this and posted "poppy signs" to notify drivers. According to a spokesperson for CALTRANS, there has been no significant increase in vehicular traffic on these highways as a result of the reclassification of the routes. Rather, highway loads have increased or decreased in the same manner as most nonscenic ones within the State. (In Beverly Hills, there would be no identification signs, and the matter would not be publicized.)

5.4.14. Land Use.

The primary goal of City designation of Santa Monica Boulevard is to preserve the existing land use pattern of that corridor, specifically the street right-of-way and alignment.

5.4.15. Demographic/Cultural Characteristics: None.

5.4.16. Economic/Financial: None.

5.4.17. Aesthetic/Design: None.

5.5. Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize the Impact.

5.5.1. Introduction: None.

5.5.2. General: None.

5.5.3. Soils, Topography, and Geology: None.

5.5.4. Drainage and Groundwater: None.

5.5.5. Vegetation and Wildlife: None.

5.5.6. Historic and Archaeological Sites: None.

5.5.7. Climate: None.

5.5.8. Air Quality: None.

5.5.9. Noise: None.

5.5.10. Community Services: None.

5.5.11. Utilities: None.

5.5.12. Traffic and Circulation: None.

5.5.13. Aesthetic/Design: None.

5.6. Adverse Environmental Effect which Cannot Be Avoided if the Element Were Implemented: None.

5.7. Alternatives to the Proposed Action.

5.7.1. No project, i.e., no Scenic Highway Element.

Adoption of this alternative would place the City in violation of Section 65302(g) of the Government Code and might make Beverly Hills liable to legal sanctions, including mandamus actions and possible injunctions to incur a "proper" Element.

5.7.2. Proposed Scenic Highway Element. (As submitted to the City Planning Commission.)

This alternative provides scenic highway data and analysis and proposes programs to fulfill the goals of the law.

5.7.3. Proposition of Fewer Scenic Highways.

Fewer scenic highways might be proposed; in this case, Beverly Hills might recommend development of the same routes planned by the County; or the City might not propose any scenic highways at all. Such an action would be in violation of the spirit and intent of the Element; and the latter alternative proposing no scenic highways might be equitable to a "no project" alternative.

5.7.4. Proposition of Additional Scenic Highways.

Additional roads might be proposed for scenic highway designation. Several have cer-

tain scenic characteristics that may make such designation feasible. However, they were not selected because they are not in need of additional protection.

5.8. The Relationship between Local Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity: None.

5.9. Irreversible Environmental Changes which Would Be Involved in the Proposed Action Should It Be Implemented: None.

5.10. Growth-Inducing Impact: None.

6. APPENDIX.

Comments received on draft environmental impact report: None.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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